

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABIDJA 08809 070945Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----125301 071127Z /14

R 061535Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5195
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 8809

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: RH, PDEV, UK, IV
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: APPROACH TO IVORY COAST GOVERNMENT

REF: STATE 209162

1. UK AMBASSADOR WRIGHT AND CHARGE CALLED SEPTEMBER 6 ON AUGUSTE DENISE WHO IN HOUPHOUET'S ABSENCE IS ACTING CHIEF OF STATE OF IVORY COAST. WRIGHT LED PRESENTATION AND GAVE DENISE FRENCH COPIES OF MAIN SECTION OF UK WHITE PAPER AND OF FONSEC OWENS' PRESS STATEMENT ON LAW AND ORDER, AS WELL AS ENGLISH TEXTS OF WHITE PAPER ANNEXES. WRIGHT ALSO GAVE BRIEF RESUME OF THE PROPOSALS AND WENT OVER TALKING POINTS (WHICH WE HAD PROVIDED HIM) FROM REFTEL.

2. IN RESPONSE DENISE SAID THAT RHODESIAN PROBLEM WAS BASICALLY THE FAULT OF THE UK GOVERNMENT IN NOT HAVING BEEN PREPARED FORCEFULLY IF NECESSARY TO DECOLONIZE BOTH PORTIONS OF RHODESIA. THIS HAD ENABLED ILLEGAL SMITH REGIME TO CONTINUE IN POWER IN CONTRAST WITH EVENTS IN ZAMBIA. TODAY, DENISE CONTINUED, IAN SMITH WAS UNREASONABLE AND INTRACTABLE AND CLEARLY THE MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCK TO ANY SETTLEMENT. SMITH WOULD CONTINUE ADAMANT AND REFUSE CONCESSIONS UNLESS AND UNTIL THE SUPPORT HE RECEIVED FROM SOUTH AFRICA WAS ENDED. THE KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF THE UK-U.S. PROPOSALS, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ABIDJA 08809 070945Z

DENISE THOUGHT, WAS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND IT WAS UP TO WESTERN EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES TO BRING EVERY POSSIBLE PRESSURE, ECONOMIC AND OTHERWISE TO BEAR ON VORSTER TO BEASE HIS SUPPORT FOR THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT. WHEN THIS HAPPENED, DENISE BELIEVED SMITH WOULD BE QUICKLY FORCED TO ACCEDE TO THESE OR SIMILAR PROPOSALS.

3. CHARGE NOTED THAT U.S. AND UK HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY FORCEFUL WITH SAG AND MENTIONED VICE-PRESIDENT MONDALE'S MEETING WITH VORSTER IN VIENNA. WE ASSURED DENISE THAT THESE PRESSURES WOULD CONTINUE.

4. DENISE SAID THAT IVORY COAST WOULD SEEK WHEREVER POSSIBLE TO BE HELPFUL IN ACHIEVING A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM. IN PARTICULAR, PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET HAD SPOKEN WITH LEADERS OF THE SEVERAL LIBERATION GROUPS URGING THEM TO UNITE AND TO PRESENT A COMMON FRONT. DIVISIONS BETWEEN THE SEVERAL LIBERATION GROUPS PLAYED INTO SMITH'S HANDS AND MADE IT EASIER FOR HIM TO PRESS FOR AN "INTERNAL SOLUTION." DENISE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OUR DEMARCHE AND ASKED THAT GOIC BE KEPT INFORMED AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE ABOUT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

5. IN CLOSING, AMBASSADOR WRIGHT NOTED AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S STATEMENT THAT THESE PROPOSALS REPRESENTED ONLY ONE STEP OF A PROCESS WHICH WOULD INVOLVE MANY STEPS. CHARGE MENTIONED PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET'S RECENT STATEMENT IN PARIS THAT "WISDOM WILL EVENTUALLY TRIUMPH" IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. DENISE CONCURRED AND REITERATED HIS APPRECIATION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INFORMATION EXCHANGE, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ABIDJA08809
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770323-0292
Format: TEL
From: ABIDJAN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770997/aaaaddnu.tel
Line Count: 84
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Message ID: b62f784d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 STATE 209162
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1384573
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: APPROACH TO IVORY COAST GOVERNMENT
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK, IV, (DENISE, AUGUSTE), (OWEN, DAVID)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b62f784d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009